

**ABSTRACT**

The invention includes a system for, a method for, and a method of doing business by remotely determining the contents of a mail receptacle. Mail includes a machine-readable label incorporated into a piece of mail programmed with at least one property of the piece of mail. A mail receptacle includes a machine-readable label reader for reading the machine-readable label, a processor for receiving the at least one property of the piece of mail from the machine-readable label reader, and a memory for storing the at least one property of the piece of mail. The memory can be remotely accessed by a means for remotely accessing the memory to determine the contents of the mail receptacle.

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